

Minutes, Public Works Committee
Meeting Tuesday, September 9, 2008, 7:00

Attending: Rob Crowner (Chair), Steve Braun, Don George, Charlie Moran, Vince O'Connor; Guilford Mooring Superintendent; Andrew Melnechuk, Public Transportation Committee; Stephanie O'Keefe, Select Board.

1. Administrative:

- a. Minutes of August 5, 2008: Moved to accept. **Voted: 5-0** (unanimous)
- b. Next scheduled meeting: October 7, 7:00.

2. Old Business:

- a. Lincoln Avenue traffic calming proposals

Steve Braun brought a draft with eight proposed motions that responded to the Town Manager's August 4 request for PWC recommendations to the Select Board for traffic management on Lincoln and Sunset Avenues and Fearing Street.

Vince O'Connor asked when the Town's draft Traffic Management Policy will be ready. Guilford Mooring responded: late October. This draft will list every road in town. Roads will be classified as they have been in earlier reports: major and minor arterials, major and minor collectors, major and minor local. But, in addition, all roadways will be classified on the basis of their relative importance to emergency responders (i.e. fire and ambulance). In addition, bus routes will be identified. These factors are relevant because traffic management techniques vary with road classification. For example, installation of devices that cause a vertical displacement of vehicles are generally not appropriate for roads designated as primary emergency vehicle response routes.

Moved: That the draft town-wide policy on traffic management that is currently nearing completion by Mr. Mooring be brought forward for review by this Committee, town staff, and interested Town residents. Approved: 5-0.

Moved: That a final version of a town-wide traffic management policy be transmitted expeditiously to the Select Board for their approval. Approved: 5-0.

The Committee discussed the proposals for partial street closure outlined in the Town Manager's letter of August 4. These proposals would create partial closures at the intersections of Sunset Avenue and Fearing Street, and Lincoln Avenue and Fearing Street, making it impossible for northbound traffic to access the University.

Moved: That in the absence of a town-wide traffic management policy, the Committee cannot recommend either of the partial street closure plans outlined in Mr. Shaffer's letter of August 4. Approved: 5-0

The Committee discussed a proposal for eliminating heavy commercial truck traffic from Lincoln Avenue. After review, it was clear to the Committee that the proposal would be expensive to research and not effective, given that heavy truck traffic on Lincoln has not, in earlier surveys, risen to the state-mandated 5% that is required before a town or municipality can take action to prohibit such traffic.

Moved: That the Town not proceed with an investigation into eliminating truck traffic on Lincoln and Sunset avenues because an earlier traffic study determined that heavy commercial truck traffic is less than the state-mandated 5% minimum required for taking such action. Approved: 5-0

The Committee discussed the proposal to prohibit left turns for eastbound Rt. 9 traffic onto Blue Hills Road, Dana Street, and Lincoln Avenue. There was general agreement that this would be ineffective in its aim (reduce northbound traffic on Lincoln) and would create inconvenience for residents of the neighborhoods on Blue Hills, Dana, and the southern half of Lincoln. Further, this action would not address the root problem, which is too-short stacking-lanes on Route 9 for eastbound travelers wanting to turn left to the University on 116 and University Drive. Mr. Mooring noted that the lengthening of these stacking lanes is still a possibility since they would be part of the proposed "Big WalMart" project.

Moved: That the town not pursue the installation of "No Left Turn" signs on Dana, Blue Hills, or Lincoln as these would prove highly inconvenient Approved: 4-1-0.

The Committee discussed last fall's experiment with temporary "speed cushions" on Lincoln Avenue: their shape, placement. Mr. Braun presented the results of a neighborhood survey which showed support for the cushions, as well as strong support for the elimination of the "pass-through" cuts, which were routinely used by motorists to avoid the humps. Since such avoidance involves crossing the centerline of the road, this was seen as dangerous. Speed-control devices which have the same general dimensions of the "cushions" (i.e. wide, with tapered edged) but *without* the cut-through are called "speed humps." Such "speed humps" allow ample room on either end for both drainage and easy passage for bicyclists. After the discussion it was

Moved: That a set of four permanent speed humps be installed on Lincoln Avenue in the spring of 2009. Approved: 4-0-1

And, after a short discussion, it was

Moved: That the Town not pursue any of the various "one-way loop" ideas that have been proposed due to their inconvenience to some residents and the potential encouragement of dangerous driving behaviors. Approved: 4-1-0

b. Road Repair Subcommittee report--not yet ready. Mr. Mooring is overseeing the development of a fine-grained assessment of all relevant town roadways. This assessment will be the basis for the sub-committee's recommendations for additional funding in coming years for street repairs. The next subcommittee meeting is set for Thursday 8:30 Oct. 2.

c. Updates:

East Leverett Road bridge--almost ready to take down the forms. Vince reports that bridge deck is in place. Open soon.

Parking on Cottage St.--meeting 7:00 pm Sept 17th--public meeting sponsored by the DPW . Goal is to determine which side to do no parking. Chestnut, High, Taylor. Vince O'Connor asks that the meeting be posted so that PWC members can go to listen without violating open meeting laws.

North Pleasant: sidewalks good, resurfacing going well.

Concerns were raised about the bike lane on the repaved North Pleasant. Curb juts in, but the lane is still 4' wide. It is suggested that Committee members visit this site.

3. New business:

Parking Orientation near Food for Thought bookstore. The Town Manager had asked the Committee to re-consider its vote against the creation of diagonal parking in this area. The Committee had earlier voted against this proposal because of the anticipated hazard posed to bicyclists of drivers backing out of such spaces. Discussion of this matter was postponed to the next meeting. Rob Crowner will ask the Town Manager for a proposal and rationale.

4. Announcements: Stephen Puffer decided not to be reappointed. Moved but not voted: That PWC thanks Mr. Puffer for his many years of service on the PWC. Vince will get card.

Vince O'Connor asks that planning for bus pull-offs on Main Street be started now, to allow time for needed right-of-way land acquisition. Through Andrew Melnechuk, the Committee asked the Public Transportation Committee to look into this as well as PWC.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlie Moran, Sec'y *pro tem*.